

## Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15  
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 MC-02 ACDA-07 PRS-01  
TRSE-00 OMB-01 IGA-02 L-03 H-01 EB-07 /080 W  
-----084671 250612Z /12

R 241026Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2456

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CINCPAC

JCS

COMIDEASTFOR

SECDEF

CSAF

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 6494

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PK, US

SUBJECT: MILITARY REACTION TO A-7 TURNDOWN

BEGIN SUMMARY: PAK MILITARY REACTION TO THE USG DECISION  
TO TURN DOWN PAKISTAN'S REQUEST FOR A-7S HAS BEEN MUTED.  
A VARIETY OF REASONS, SOME CONTRADICTORY, FOR THE TURNDOWN  
ARE MENTIONED. THE GOP HAS NOT MADE AN EFFORT TO EXPLAIN  
THE REAL REASONS TO ITS MILITARY, AND SENIOR MILITARY  
OFFICERS DO NOT APPEAR TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THE GLOBAL  
NATURE OF OUR NEW ARMS POLICY AND SPECIFICALLY ITS  
APPLICATION TO PAKISTAN. WE CONTINUE TO CLARIFY OUR  
POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON PAKISTAN'S DEFENSE NEEDS WHEN  
WE MEET PAK MILITARY OFFICERS. FOLLOWING THE US  
DECISION THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE HAS BEEN GIVING SERIOUS  
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CONSIDERATION TO ALTERNATIVES TO THE A-7, INCLUDING  
THE FRENCH MIRAGE. END SUMMARY.

1. PAK MILITARY REACTION TO THE USG DECISION TO TURN  
DOWN PAKISTAN'S REQUEST FOR A-7'S HAS BEEN MUTED. IN  
CONTACTS EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE HAD WITH SENIOR MILITARY  
OFFICERS, THE LATTER HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT

OVER THE DECISION BUT ALSO INDICATED THEY WERE NOT SURPRISED. THE FEW MILITARY OFFICERS AND SENIOR MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OFFICIALS WHO HAVE RAISED THE ISSUE WITH US DO NOT SEEM TO UNDERSTAND FULLY THE USG'S NEW ARMS TRANSFER POLICY AND HOW IT APPLIES TO PAKISTAN AND FEEL THAT THE TURNDOWN WAS DIRECTED TO PAKISTAN ALONE. ONE MISCONCEPTION WE HAVE HEARD REGARDING THE DECISION IS THAT THE US UNILATERALLY ABROGATED AN AGREEMENT ALLEGEDLY REACHED IN AUGUST 1976 DURING KISSINGER'S VISIT, FOR THE SALE OF THE AIRCRAFT.

2. ALTHOUGH THE RESPONSE TO THE TURNDOWN HAS BEEN UNEXCEPTIONAL, OFFICERS WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN LIST A VARIETY OF REASONS, SOME CONTRADICTORY, WHY THE USG DID NOT APPROVE THE SALE. MANY OFFICERS THINK THE TURNDOWN WAS DUE TO THE US NOT FULLY UNDERSTANDING OR APPRECIATING PAKISTAN'S LEGITIMATE DEFENSE NEEDS. THIS GROUP DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THE GLOBAL NATURE OF OUR NEW ARMS POLICY AND SPECIFICALLY ITS APPLICATION TO PAKISTAN. WE HAVE HEARD THAT SOME OFFICERS SUSPECT THE US WILL ALSO TURN DOWN THE GOP'S REQUEST FOR F-5E'S AND OTHER MODERN COMBAT AIRCRAFT AS A RESULT OF THE NEW POLICY. OTHERS BELIEVE THAT THE USG DECISION WAS TAKEN IN RETALIATION FOR BHUTTO'S ACCUSATIONS OF US INTERFERENCE IN PAKISTAN.

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3. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD SOME OFFICERS EXPRESS THE BELIEF THAT THE REQUEST FOR A-7'S WAS UNREALISTIC IN THE FIRST INSTANCE AND IN FACT IS ONLY A GOP BARGAINING PLOY TO OBTAIN MAXIMUM BENEFITS IN EXCHANGE FOR CANCELLING THE PURCHASE OF A REPROCESSING PLANT. THOSE SUBSCRIBING TO THIS VIEW BELIEVE THAT SINCE THE US HAS TURNED DOWN THE REQUEST FOR A-7'S, THE US WILL FEEL AN OBLIGATION TO MEET PAKISTAN'S REQUEST FOR SOME OTHER ADVANCED AIRCRAFT. STILL OTHERS BELIEVE THE GOP COULD NOT HAVE AFFORDED THE \$700 MILLION OUTLAY FOR THE PURCHASE AND WERE RELIEVED THE SALE DID NOT GO THROUGH FORCING PAKISTAN TO ADMIT IT HAD NO FUNDS TO PURCHASE THE AIRCRAFT.

4. ONE FACT STANDS OUT PROMINENTLY FROM THIS MASS OF SPECULATION AND CONJECTURE - THAT THE GOP HAS NOT MADE A CONCERTED EFFORT TO EXPLAIN THE REAL REASONS FOR THE

TURNDOWN TO ITS MILITARY. WE HAVE STRONGLY SUSPECTED, BASED ON OUR TALKS WITH MILITARY OFFICERS, THAT THE GOP HAS SUPPLIED THE MILITARY WITH NEITHER INFORMATION ON OUR NEW ARMS SALES POLICY NOR THE SPECIFIC REASONS WE

LAQN THE GOP FOR THE TURNDOWN. WE ASSUME THIS TACTIC IS A RESULT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S ATTEMPT TO IMPLICATE THE US IN EFFORTS TO OVERTHROW HIM AND HIS CONSEQUENT DESIRE TO HAVE NEGATIVE INTERPRETATIONS PUT ON THE A-7 TURNDOWN. CONSEQUENTLY, WHEN WE MEET PAK MILITARY OFFDCERS WE TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY, IN A LOW-KEY MANNER, TO CLARIFY OUR ARMS SALES POLICY. WE SPECIFICALLY ATTEMPT TO ENSURE THAT PAK MILITARY OFFICERS UNDERSTAND HOW THE NEW POLICY APPLIES TO PAKISTAN AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR A FUTURE MILITARY SALES RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. ON AIRCRAFT, WHEN ASKED WE REITERATE OUR POSITION THAT WE WOULD BE WILLING TO CONSIDER THE SALE OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT OTHER THAN THE A-7.

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5. ONE OF THE REASONS FOR THE MILITARY'S MUTED AND GENERALLY UNEMOTIONAL RESPONSE IS THAT THE FORMAL

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R 241026Z JUN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
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REQUEST HAD BEEN PENDING FOR ONE YEAR, ALTHOUGH EMBASSY WAS AWARE OF THEIR DESIRES FOR THE A-7 FOR AT LEAST ONE YEAR PRIOR TO THE REQUEST, AND THERE WAS A GROWING FEELING AMONG SENIOR OFFICERS THAT THE LONGER THE DECISION WAS DELAYED THE GREATER THE LIKELIHOOD OF A TURNDOWN. IN ADDITION MANY PAKISTANIS FELT THAT WITH PRESIDENT CARTER'S VICTORY IN NOVEMBER, THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE LESS SYMPATHETIC THAN THE PREVIOUS ONE TO PAKISTAN'S MILITARY REQUIREMENTS. THIS ATTITUDE IS BASED ON MANY PAKISTANIS' PRECONCEPTION THAT DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATIONS ARE HISTORICALLY MORE FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARDS INDIA THAN PAKISTAN.

6. ONE SURPRISING DEVELOPMENT RESULTING FROM THE U.S. DECISION ON THE PROPOSED SALE HAS BEEN THE CHANGE IN CONFIDENTIAL

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ATTITUDE OF THE CHIEF OF AIR STAFF, ZULFIQAR ALI KHAN, REGARDING THE TYPE OF AIRCRAFT BEST SUITED TO THE PAF'S NEEDS. WHILE THE A-7 WAS UNDER CONSIDERATION THE AIR CHIEF HAD DOWNPLAYED THE NEED FOR AN AIRCRAFT WITH HIGH SURVIVABILITY. HOWEVER, IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH ODRP, AFTER THE TURNDOWN HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED, THE AIR CHIEF MARSHAL STRESSED THE PAF'S NEED FOR AN AIRCRAFT WITH A GOOD SELF-DEFENSE CAPABILITY.

7. FOLLOWING THE U.S. DECISION ON PAKISTAN'S REQUEST, WE UNDERSTAND THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE HAS BEEN GIVING SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO ALTERNATIVES TO THE A-7, INCLUDING THE MIRAGE. WE KNOW THAT BOTH WITHIN THE PAF AND DEFENSE MINISTRY THERE ARE THOSE WHO FAVOR PURCHASING FROM THE FRENCH WHILE OTHERS STILL FAVOR A U.S. PLANE. THE PAF CHIEF MENTIONED TO ODRP THAT HE WOULD CONSIDER THE F-5E IF IT WERE ARMED WITH AIM-9L MISSILES WHICH HE FEELS ARE NECESSARY TO OFFSET THE ADVANTAGES INDIAN MIG-21'S HAVE OVER THE F-5E. IN A CONVERSATION ODRP HAD WITH MASOOD HASSAN, SECRETARY IN DEFENSE PRODUCTION, MASOOD IMPLIED THAT PAKISTAN DID NOT WANT TO PUT ALL ITS EGGS IN ONE BASKET AND WAS IN THE PROCESS OF LOOKING AT AIRCRAFT FROM OTHER COUNTRIES. THE SECRETARY DID NOT MENTION ANY SPECIFIC AIRCRAFT. ODRP AND DEFATT REPORT THAT SINCE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TURNDOWN THE FRENCH HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY MEETING WITH DEFENSE MINISTRY OFFICIALS AND WE ASSUME ARE PRESSING THE PAKS TO LOOK AT THE MIRAGE AS A REPLACEMENT FOR THE PAF'S AGING F-86 AND B-57 FLEET.

8. IF THE GOP CAN FIND THE NECESSARY FUNDING, IT MAY CONSIDER THE PURCHASE OF BOTH THE MIRAGE AND THE F-5E.

THE SALES ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE AND THE PAF-WHEN  
THE A-7 SALE WAS A POSSIBILITY-TALKED IN GENERAL TERMS  
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ABOUT THE NEED FOR A COMBAT AIRCRAFT TO PROTECT THE A-7.  
THEREFORE, IF THE GOP DOES PURCHASE THE MIRAGE, IT MAY  
STILL BE INTERESTED IN THE F-5E AS WELL AS A FIGHTER-  
INTERCEPTOR AND AS PROTECTION FOR THE MIRAGE USED AS A  
FIGHTER-BOMBER.

9. ON THE BASIS OF OUR ADMITTEDLY LIMITED CONTACTS WITH  
MILITARY OFFICERS ON THE A-7 TURNDOWN, WE ARE LEFT WITH  
THE IMPRESSION THAT OUR ACTION GENERALLY DID NOT LEAVE  
A RESIDUE OF ILL WILL OR MISTRUST ON THE PART OF THE  
MILITARY. ALTHOUGH SOME ARE UNDOUBTEDLY DISAPPOINTED,  
OTHERS SEE OUR DECISION AS PROOF OF THE NEED TO DIVERSIFY  
PAKISTAN'S SOURCES FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT. MANY OTHERS  
SEE OUR ACTION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE POLITICAL RELATIONS  
BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND VIEW IT AS UNDERSTANDABLE  
IN LIGHT OF THE PM'S ATTACKS ON THE U.S. MOST MILITARY  
OFFICERS STILL BELIEVE THAT IN TERMS OF PRICE, MAINTENANCE  
AND PRODUCT RELIABILITY IT IS IN PAKISTAN'S INTEREST TO  
PURCHASE U.S. ARMS.  
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## Message Attributes

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